

Commissioner's Weekly Field Memo
Thursday, May 22, 2014

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Action Item Calendar

- Today** (May 22): [Asset protection](#) plans due
- Tuesday** (May 27): [Classifications data](#) clean-up due
- May 30: District [Teacher of the Year](#) nominations due
- May 30: Reports on students taking [PARCC](#) due
- June 2: Preliminary academic or [behavioral-intervention data](#) due
- June 2: Race to the Top amendments due (see [below](#))
- June 20: School [Health](#) Reports due
- June 20: [Roster verification](#) to be completed
- June 23: Academic or [Behavioral-intervention final](#) data due
- July 14: [Educator-evaluation data](#) due
- July 15: [Housing aid](#) forms due
- July 18: [UCOA](#) preliminary data due
- September 30: [UCOA FY 2014](#) data due

Notes from Commissioner Gist

1. STEM to STEAM conference scheduled for May 30 at Rhode Island College

One of the key areas that I have been discussing as I meet with educators, business leaders, and other friends of education across the state is the growing movement of STEM to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, *Arts*, and Mathematics). I highlighted STEM to STEAM earlier this year in my annual address to the General Assembly. What better place is there for STEM to STEAM than Rhode Island? As I said to the legislators: “With our world-renowned creative-arts culture, our history of innovation in manufacturing and design, and our growing ‘maker movement’ Rhode Island is the perfect home base for what has become a worldwide phenomenon.”

Rhode Islanders from many fields have been discussing this important initiative, and many of us will come together on Friday, May 30, for the annual Rhode Island STEM Center conference: Creating Rhode Island’s Future Building Capacity for STE[A]M. The conference will run from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., in Alger Hall, at Rhode Island College. Topics under discussion will include:

- connecting engaged students to increase interest in STE[A]M;
- connecting STE[A]M skills to increase career readiness; and
- connecting statewide sectors to build on the wonderful work that is being accomplished in Rhode Island.

If you're interested in attending, here is a link to the registration page:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1TamZolPTsTtP302AcPjSAx-HiPPcbkOSSf5eVyYmio/viewform?sid&c=0&w=1&token>

2. RIDE reviewing six new charter proposals

RIDE has received proposals for six charter public schools that would like to open in the fall of 2015. RIDE has scheduled public hearings over the next two months on each of the six proposals. Two schools would be based on Providence; one would be a mayoral academy in Kent County, another would be a mayoral academy for the Woonsocket area, and two others (one of which would focus on science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics, i.e., STEAM) would be in Newport County. We have posted a schedule of the hearings and links to each of the six proposals on our website, under the tab "Charter School Proposals Under Review":

<http://ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/RIPublicSchools/CharterSchools.aspx>

3. Warwick educator named R.I. School Nurse-Teacher of the Year

Bernadette McDowell, the school nurse-teacher at Winman Jr. High School, in Warwick, has been honored by the Rhode Island Certified School Nurse Teachers as the R.I. School Nurse-Teacher of the Year! Bernadette has worked in the Warwick schools for more than 15 years, serving for the past 8 years at Winman. She has also been the Rhode Island director of the National Association of School Nurses, and Bernadette teaches community health and provides adult-education services for the Warwick schools. Congratulations on this honor, Bernadette!

From RIDE

Educator Recognition:

4. *Reminder:* RIDE seeking names of those selected for 2014-15 District Teachers of the Year; profile sheets due May 30

District Teacher of the Year profile sheets are due by Friday, **May 30**. Please visit our Educator Recognition web page or click on the following link to download the 2014-15 District Teacher of the Year profile sheet:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/DTOY_2014_Application

If you have any questions regarding the District Teacher of the Year program, please contact Mary Keenan, at mary.keenan@ride.ri.gov or 222-8497.

5. RIDE schedules May 29 meeting for prospective candidates for National Board Certification

RIDE will hold a meeting for all educators who are considering entering the National Board assessment process for the next school year (2014-15) on Thursday, **May 29**, at RIDE, Room 242 from 4 to 6 p.m.

The purpose of this meeting is to provide an overview of the updated National Board assessment process, to answer any questions individuals might have, and to provide suggestions as to what candidates can do over the summer months to begin the process and to get a head start for the fall. Candidates who are interested in applying for National Board certification should go to <http://www.nbpts.org/> for more information.

Please share this information with your staff members and colleagues who might be interested in pursuing National Board certification. Please direct any questions on National Board certification to Mary Keenan, at Mary.Keenan@ride.ri.gov.

Race to the Top:

6. *Reminder: Race to the Top Final Year 4 Amendments and No-Cost Extension Amendments due June 2*

The final date for submitting Race to the Top amendments for Year 4 is **June 2**. Under the Year 4 timelines, funds must be obligated by September 23 and liquidated by December 23. For LEAs interested in amending or applying to extend their Race to the Top funding for Year 5 on activities that have been approved by the U.S. Department of Education, the deadline is also June 2. If you have any questions regarding the amendment process, please contact Leah.McPhail@ride.ri.gov, who will direct your request to the right member of the Race to the Top team.

Career and Technical Education:

7. High schools, career-technical centers to receive information about next data collection

RIDE is entering year two of the career-and-technical education (CTE) data collection. Volunteer CTE centers and comprehensive high schools submitted preliminary data for the previous (2012-13) school year. In the coming weeks, all CTE centers and comprehensive high schools with provisionally approved career-technical programs will receive information about the data collection and will be asked to submit basic

information about their provisionally approved programs for the current school year.

This is the last year of a manual collection for CTE data. RIDE is in the process of integrating the CTE data collection into an automated eRIDE collection and into district and school information systems. RIDE has worked closely with field representatives to develop an efficient and streamlined approach. For more information about CTE data collection, please contact Paula Barney, at paula.barney@ride.ri.gov or 222-8399.

From other state agencies

8. Workshop on teaching about energy scheduled for June 11

The Office of Energy Resources and the National Energy Education Development (NEED) Project are excited to announce the upcoming Rhode Island teacher workshop to be held June 11 at the Juanita Sanchez Complex, 182 Thurbers Ave., Providence. Classroom Teachers (grades 4 through 12) will have a unique opportunity to learn energy in a fun and exciting way.

Thanks to the Office of Energy Resources, the workshop is free. Teachers will receive substitute reimbursement, breakfast and lunch is provided, and participating teachers will receive hands-on curriculum resources for use with student teams back in the classroom.

The NEED Project's mission is to promote an energy-conscious and educated society. NEED is the nation's leading provider of energy programs and materials to schools. All NEED learning activities are correlated to Rhode Island science objectives. The program will make teaching energy exciting and fun as you return to your classroom. Participation in the workshop provides educators with a

NEED Science of Energy Kit. The kit teaches the concepts of force, motion, light, sound, heat, electricity, magnetism, and energy transformations through hands-on activities.

Substitute reimbursement forms will be available at the workshop, and substitute costs will be reimbursed to all school districts.

Space is limited; please register by **June 2**. To register online for the workshop, visit http://www.need.org/calendar_list.asp and click on the workshop you would like to attend.

Questions about the workshop or about reimbursement forms for substitutes? Contact Wendi Moss, at (800) 875-5029 or at wmoss@need.org

From other organizations

9. Free training in Reading Recovery available to teachers; application deadline is June 15

Please see this message from Reading Recovery Rhode Island:

The 2014-15 school year will be the last year to train new Reading Recovery teachers for free under the i3 grant.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded an i3 (Investing in Innovation) grant to Reading Recovery (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html>). Reading Recovery was a winner in the scale-up category.

Reading Recovery is a preventive short-term intervention for first-graders who are having the most difficulty learning to read and

write. The goal of the intervention is to help students make accelerated progress in reading and writing so that they reach expected grade-level performance within 20 weeks. Reading Recovery lessons:

- are daily, one-to-one, 30-minute lessons, designed to respond to each child's strengths and needs through meaningful reading and writing activities;
- are provided for approximately 12 to 20 weeks, depending on the progress of the child; and
- target the 5 essential components of reading instruction identified by the National Reading Panel: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

Reading Recovery is by definition an early-intervening service (EIS) and a Response to Intervention approach.

Reading Recovery's high success rate reduces placements in special education and retentions, thus diminishing consequences and costs of reading failure.

Reading Recovery's research received the highest rating of all beginning reading programs by the U.S. Department of Education What Works Clearinghouse (2007, 2013).

The award for the i3 grant was \$55 million. This grant funds:

- the entire year of Reading Recovery teacher training; and
- a \$1,500 stipend to be used during the year of training.

Included in the free training are 8 graduate credits, all professional books, and an extensive leveled library of children's books, as well as materials such as an easel and magnetic letters.

All schools are eligible. The i3 grant prioritizes schools with a high need of increased teacher expertise:

- Priority 1 Schools: schools with large proportion of English language learners, schools located in rural areas, and schools ranked in the bottom 5 percent of schools statewide;
- Priority 2 Schools: Title I schools in restructuring or corrective action; and
- Priority 3 Schools: any other school (public, parochial, or charter public).

We are currently recruiting teachers for training classes for next year (the 2014-15 school year). Next year's teacher-training classes begin in August and run until May 2015. The application deadline is **June 15**.

If you need more information regarding Reading Recovery in Rhode Island, please contact:

Dr. Julie Francis, Warwick Public Schools, at francisj@warwickschools.org.

10. Business Innovation Factory to hold community critique of Teachers Design for Education project

Please see this message from the Business Innovation Factory:

You're invited to help us with a design critique of our Teachers Design for Education (TD4Ed) project

In TD4Ed, over the past several months, we've asked teams of teachers from Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Chicago, and Philadelphia to tackle a problem in education using the design thinking process. Over the course of six weeks, they explored their design challenges and came up with ideas to prototype and test in the real world.

On Saturday, **June 7**, at 2:30 p.m., we will have a TD4Ed Community Critique featuring 12 of our teams presenting their innovation solutions at the Business Innovation Factory (BIF) offices, 60 Valley St., Unit 25, Providence. We invite you to come by our office to help our teams build on their ideas! Click [here](#) to RSVP and for more information.

This will be our first experiment with the online community-critique process. We will be streaming live video of the presentations and running a facilitated online discussion. If you're interested in participating in the online TD4Ed Community Critique, contact Renee Hopkins, BIF Community Engagement Manager, at renee@businessinnovationfactory.com.

11. Smart Girls Group offers resources to middle-school, high-school women

Please see this message from the Smart Girls Group:

The Smart Girls Group for middle school and high school provides products, resources, and opportunities for ambitious young women, in an effort to arm them with all of the tools that they need to succeed. This all takes place within a sisterhood

environment, made up of young women from more than 35 countries around the world. Smart Girl's Society is this Smart Girls Group's campus chapter program. This curriculum-based program started as an effort to connect ambitious, young female trailblazers across campuses, and it has evolved into a collaborative mastermind, where each meeting consists of a "smarts," or theme, that works to help young women with personal and professional development. From leadership to healthy living, and everything in between, this program empowers young women to live up to their potential, and, of course, it is in our signature sisterhood environment. The program was created to allow for each institution to customize it based on its individual needs and interests while still having the Smart Girls Group structure. We also connect middle-school and high-school women with Smart Girl Sisters who are in college as well as with women in our Smart Women's Network, who can serve as mentors and valuable connections for college and beyond. Furthermore, this program allows young women to connect with other Smart Girl Sisters from across the globe, from more than 35 countries and growing. For more information on this program, please see our [2013-2014 Campus Chapter Information Kit](#) or e-mail Tori, our Director of Community Development, at tori@thesmartgirlsgroup.com.

More information on the Smart Girls Group can be found at thesmartgirlsgroup.com ;we are also having a major conference this summer in New York City, and our conference website is smartgirlssummit.com. The conference is open to all ages, and we have a very impressive line of speakers coming, sure to inspire and motivate all who attend!

RIDE will post this field memo on Tuesday, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/CommissionerDeborahAGist/FieldMemos.aspx>